

Lavender Library, Archives and Cultural Exchange

# Lambda Letters Project 32569

Vol. 3, No. 6

June, 1995

6212 Silverton Way, Carmichael, California 95608

Phone (916) 965-6851

# We Must Grow to Defeat Our Enemies!

Lambda Letters must grow if we are ever to help beat the forces—most of them from political conservatives that threaten to impact our ways of life, and we need your help to make that growth occur. Consider the following:

- In 1994 a domestic partner registration bill made it all the way to the Governor's desk before being vetoed by Governor Wilson. In 1995 a new domestic partner registration bill, A.B 627 (Kuehl, D-Encino), failed to pass its first committee.
- In 1994 bills to provide health benefits for the domestic partners of government employees passed both houses of the state legislature. This year a similar bill, S.B. 1159 (Hayden, D-Los Angeles), failed to pass its first committee.
- In April of this year a bill to prohibit public schools and colleges from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation passed its first committee but died in its second committee.
- In May a bill to make it more difficult for those who commit domestic violence to get custody of the children, A.B. 800 (Kuehl), failed to pass its first committee.

These are important bills. Their failure to pass is a

real tragedy and a reflection of the despicable mentality taking control of our legislature. We must fight back!

These bills were all made "two-year bills," which means they can be reconsidered next year. However, the above facts make it very clear that Lambda Letters and other groups must greatly increase their pressure on legislators if we ever hope to get our bills passed. For some time now, unfortunately, the growth of Lambda Letters has been stalled. For example:

- Last year we collected 28,297 letters from our members. However, in the prior year we collected 1,000 more than that.
- Last year we ended the year with 708 members, though we began the year with 771 members.
- During much of last year 6–8 volunteers brought copies of our letters to groups and committees for others to sign. Now only two volunteers are doing that.

It is very important for us to increase the number of members who receive our monthly mailings. Please tell your friends about the Project and urge them to join. Having people bring letters to meetings they attend and ask others to sign them is another good way of increasing input to our legislators. We can supply you with as many copies of letters as you can use, and we will pay the postage both ways in order to send you the letters and have you return the signed letters to us. Please consider volunteering for this activity.

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# **Lambda Letters Progress Report**

#### Letters Collected

April, 1995 1,938 letters
This year 8,821 letters
Dollars Spent
April, 1995 \$1,348

This year

Can You Help?

Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.

\$6,923

### Lambda Letters Project

#### Statement of Purpose

To promote people of color, feminist, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and HIV/AIDS status advocacy and to bring people of color, women, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and persons affected by or living with HIV/AIDS into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof.

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# The Budget vs. Appropriations: a Big Difference

For those of us who have been following Congressional efforts to balance the federal budget by the year 2002, most of the media emphasis has been on various budget committees and their work.

In point of fact, budget committees have little to do with the reality of federal spending. Instead, appropriations committees do. Perhaps more importantly, not only do appropriations committees think no more than one or two years ahead, but the current appropriations committees have a majority of more traditional, long-term legislators on them, instead of the more vocal, newly elected, "Contract with America" advocates.

This means that some of the drastic cuts in human services (including Medicaid/MediCal) that have been proposed by leading Republicans will probably not actually be enacted by appropriations committees or full House/Senate votes. Instead, there will be a lot more "rational" horse trading and saving of special interest funds by the appropriations committees.

Given these facts, we are writing this month to those California Representatives who are members of the House Appropriations Committee. Medicaid is covered by a separate committee, and we will write to them later in the year.

We will send a copy and count of our letters to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the House committee, Robert Livingston (R-LA) and David Obey (D-WI), respectively. We will also send a copy of our letter to Senators Boxer and Feinstein asking for their help. (Unfortunately neither of our senators is on Senate Appropriations Committees.)

While no national AIDS service agencies have recently come up with suggested dollar amounts for 1996 or 1997 funding, our message to allow no dollar cuts from current funding levels, as well as to make provisions for both inflation and increased HIV/AIDS caseloads, does send the correct message to Congress.

# Survey Results Affect Selection of Issues

A few months ago our mailing included a survey form on which we asked you, our members, to assist the Project's Board of Directors in determining which topical issues we should focus our letters for the next year or two. We received 138 responses. The following were the top items selected in each of the topic areas on which we focus:

- To obtain passage and full enforcement of state legislation to ban hate crimes against lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and people of color. Action on the federal level would be secondary to this state effort.
- To obtain passage of federal appropriations large enough to provide for adequate funding of HIV/AIDS research, education, treatment, and care (including housing) for the growing number of HIV-infected persons.
- To obtain passage of federal legislation guaranteeing a woman's right to reproductive choice, and the right of poor women to have an abortion paid for by government funds.

Of course all of these goals include efforts to defeat opposing viewpoints.

We will implement these goals through our monthly letter-writing efforts. In addition, we hope to start sending press releases to community media, add appropriate community-based organizations to our mailing list, and expand our network of members who send out e-mail messages at times between our monthly mailings. The Project Administrator and staff members are already sending letters to politicians on your collective behalf at times between our monthly mailings.

We would appreciate your feedback concerning these goals and how we can best implement them.

in Secremento County

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BEA BETZNER, M.A., M.F.C.C Psychotherapist MFC 30303

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# Improving Efforts to **Increase Citizenship**

This month, we are asking you to support S.B. 277, introduced by Senator Richard Polanco. At this time, we believe it will pass the Senate and be assigned to the Higher Education Committee of the Assembly. Therefore we are asking you to send your letters to that committee, chaired by Marguerite Archie-Hudson (D-Los Angeles). The bill would provide for the use of State Legislation Impact Assistance Grant (SLIAG) funds to establish citizenship centers that would provide citizenship instruction and testing to assist legal permanent residents gain their citizenship.

In light of the recent passage of Proposition 187 and recent political attacks on both legal and undocumented immigrants, the Los Angeles district of Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has received over 90,000 applications for citizenship in the first five months of fiscal year 1995 (which began October 1, 1994). This is almost two-thirds of the applications received during the entire fiscal year for

1994.

In addition to providing funds for establishing badly needed citizenship centers, it would provide relief to the INS which is experiencing difficulty with the overflow of individuals seeking citizenship. SLIAG funds are federal funds provided by the Immigration Reform Act passed by Congress in the late 1980s. These funds were made available to help states cope with the impact of legalizing great numbers of previously undocumented immigrants.

According to a 1989 national survey by the National Association of Latino Elected Officials, many of these immigrants have not used the process available through the INS because they find access to clear, specific, and timely information difficult; the nature of the application procedure is intimidating; the INS fails to convey a clear understanding of the educational and naturalization process; as well as because there is a general lack of outreach or public promotion of citizenship by the INS.

The bill would establish a Citizenship Center Program providing naturalization outreach activities, assessments, guidance, counseling, and supply ser-

# **Good Thing: Boy Scouts Bill Not Moving**

S.B. 806 (Monteith, R-Modesto) would exempt private nonprofit organizations from the Unruh Civil Rights Act, thus allowing them to discriminate. The bill's real purpose is to let the Boy Scouts, in particular, to discriminate against gay men and boys. S.B. 806 has been heard twice by the Senate Judiciary Committee without a vote. The last hearing was on May 2nd. Interestingly, the Boy Scouts sent a representative to that hearing to declare that they neither

support nor oppose the legislation.

There are at least two cases pending in which the courts are set to decide whether or not the Boy Scouts already have the right to discriminate against gays. The Judiciary Committee Chair, Charles Calderon, reminded Senator Monteith of the cases and persuaded him to delay pursuing the bill until the court's rulings are issued. The committee, thereby, hoped to avoid having to take a vote on the issue. The bill can be taken up for reconsideration next year, so we must be vigilant.

vices that include—but are not limited to—fingerprinting, citizenship instruction, and citizenship testing. Each center would be required to maintain contact with the INS to facilitate the naturalization application process and the naturalization ceremony.

Immigrants to California are nearly a quarter of the state's population. The number of adult immigrants unable to vote in the 1994 elections was estimated to be approximately 4,000,000. That constitutes 17 percent of the voting age population. In the most recent congressional reapportionment, California gained seven new representatives and the addition of five of those new representatives was directly attributable to the increased immigrant population. These are legal, permanent residents who have not been able to vote because they are not naturalized. The state's democratic system of government, at all levels, suffers when one of six legal California residents cannot vote. As the bill states, "California cannot continue to conduct business as usual in the face of the strong demand for naturalization."

# The Neglected Issues of Menopause

In our youth-oriented society, menopause has been of little interest to researchers whose efforts have focused almost obsessively on the reproductive processes of childbirth, menstruation, and contraception. A recent study conducted by the Office of Technology Assessment officially declared that the medical community has essentially neglected menopause as a woman's health care issue. Generally associated with fears of aging, loss of status, and loss of sexuality, menopause is an important issue which eventually affects all women.

This month's letter focuses on H.R. 548, sponsored by Congressmember Cliff Stearns (R–FL), which would amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for a program of research and education regarding menopause. Entitled the Menopause Outreach, Research, and Education Act of 1995, this bill would fund research into the aging processes of women, with emphasis given to the physiological and behavioral effects of menopause.

Currently, the main treatment for menopause involves hormone replacement therapy using estrogen and progestin to counter the symptoms of hormone loss. But researchers still know little about the long-term consequences of combining these two hormones. Moreover, there are some important unanswered questions, such as whether progestin negates estrogen's effectiveness against heart disease

or increases the risk of breast cancer.

H.R. 548 would support research into hormonal and nonhormonal treatments, and further study of the relationship between menopause and heart disease, osteoporosis, bone fractures, bladder conditions, breast and uterine cancers, and any other relevant conditions.

Many women question the safety of hormone replacement therapy. They argue that it constitutes another form of social control over women and their sexuality, and that drug companies are the main beneficiaries. And indeed they are: the number of women aged 45 to 64 taking estrogen jumped nearly 30 percent between 1990 and 1993, from 5.8 million to 7.4 million.

Dr. Morris Notelovitz, author of *Menopause and Midlife Health*, notes that the medical community consistently underestimates the variety of women and their needs, and—by doing so—frequently undertreats some while overtreating others. Besides a lack of research, there is also a significant need for appropriate resources such as adequate counseling before a woman enters menopause. Dr. Wulf Utian, a pioneer in menopausal medicine, makes an important point: "... most practicing doctors in the U.S. have never been taught anything about menopause." H.R. 548 would establish educational and training programs on menopause for physicians and other health care professionals, as well as establish programs for the dissemination of information on menopause to the general public.

One major weakness of past research efforts is that nearly all women who participated in studies on menopause were upper-middle class, well-educated, and white. One provision of H.R. 548 stipulates that

research be conducted among various socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial groups. This comprehensive research is of growing importance as the large number of baby-boomers approaching menopause increases. By the year 2000, the number of women going through menopause will be increasing at the rate of some two million per year.

Since medical research is historically male-oriented, this bill is especially important to women's health care. H.R. 548 is currently sitting in the House Subcommittee on Health and Environment, which has two California congressmen among its members: Henry Waxman (D-Los Angeles) and Brian Bilbray (R-San Diego). Please sign this month's letter urging your committee member to support this bill.

# For all your concerns...

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# Oppose Bigoted Funding Restrictions

Please write to Congress to oppose H.R. 862 authored by Bob Dornan (R-Garden Grove) and cosponsored by John Doolittle (R-Roseville) and Ron Packard (R-Vista). H.R. 862 is a sweeping antigay measure which says that no federal funds may be used directly or indirectly to promote, condone, accept, or celebrate homosexuality, lesbianism, or bisexuality. The bill targets programs designed to prevent AIDS, hate violence, suicide, and discrimination.

The bill is currently assigned to the Subcommittee on Human Resources and Intergovernmental Relations of the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight. We urge you to write to the California members of the subcommittee—Democrats Tom Lantos (San Mateo) and Henry Waxman (Los Angeles)—urging them to assure that the bill never gets out of the subcommittee.



If passed, H.R. 862 might be used to cut off funding to school districts that have gay-supportive programs like Project 10 in Los Angeles. This program, and one like it in San Francisco, provide supportive counseling to gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth coping with discrimination from classmates or teachers. H.R. 862 might also eliminate funding for AIDS education and prevention materials and any programs that could be construed as condoning the "gay lifestyle." Probably the only materials and programs on these subjects to get funding

would be those that clearly express disapproval of being gay.

Suicide among gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth is increasing at an alarming rate. Any successful program to combat this terrible trend must include efforts to improve the self-esteem of youth, including his or her sexuality. Under H.R. 862 any school district or program that did that would risk losing federal funding. Similarly, any program aimed at persuading perpetrators of hate violence against lesbians, gays, or bisexuals to treat people of all sexual orientations with respect would also risk a loss of federal funding. Please write to Congress in opposition to H.R. 862!





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# Good Thing: Gender Tax Repeal Act Moving

In our April newsletter, the subject of our women's issue was the Gender Tax Repeal Act of 1995 (Jackie Speier, D-South San Francisco). This bill would prohibit businesses from charg-

ing men and women different prices for the same or similar goods or services. The bill has passed the Assembly Consumer Protection and the Assembly Appropriations Committees and is on the way

to a vote on the floor of the Assembly at the time this article is being written. You all provided us with 469 letters in support of this bill, giving it a major boost along the way. The bill was approved by the Appropriations Committee without a formal vote. However, the vote in the Assembly Consumer Protection Committee was as follows:

#### In Favor of the Bill

Tom Bates (D-Oakland)
Valerie Brown (D-Santa Rosa)
Susan Davis (D-San Diego)
Phil Isenberg (D-Sacramento)
Michael Machado (D-Stockton)
Jackie Speier (D-S. San Francisco)
Tom Woods (R-Redding)

### Opposed

Jim Morrissey (R-Santa Ana) Steve Baldwin (R-La Mesa) Steve Kuykendall (R-Long Beach) Bruce Thompson (R-Temecula)

(Brooks Firestone [R-Santa Barbara] was absent at the time of the vote.)

If you live in the district of one of these legislators, we encourage you to let them know how you feel about their vote.

# **Bad Thing: HIV-Testing Bill Is Moving**

S.B. 889 (Tim Leslie, R-Roseville) passed the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and was sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a hearing which was to have occurred on May 22nd. The results of the Appropriations Committee vote were not yet available at the time this article was written.

test results be shared with their mothers, their fathers if the mothers cannot be found, and with a variety of health care workers. The bill ignores the fact that children have no immune system for the first 18 months of their lives. Thus, the test results actually indicate the HIV status of the mother, not the

S.B. 889 requires that all newborn

child. As such the tests violate the mother's right to consent or refuse the test, and her right to confidentiality of HIV test results. These features of the bill are in violation of federal guidelines and a waiver of those guidelines would have to be obtained before the law could be implemented. However, that won't stop its supporters from pushing the bill.

The vote in the Assembly Health and Human Services Committee went as follows:

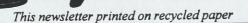
#### In Favor

Ray Haynes (R-Riverside)
Tim Leslie (R-Riverside)
Richard Polanco (D-Los Angeles)
Ken Maddy (R-Fresno)
Mike Thompson (D-Santa Rosa)

### Opposed

Teresa Hughes (D-Inglewood) Henry Mello (D-Gilroy) Hilda Solis (D-El Monte) Diane Watson (D-Los Angeles)

The Lambda Letters Project Administrator has sent letters to the Senate Appropriations Committee opposing S.B. 889. We will work to stop this bill!



# Our Auction Was a Great Success!

This year's annual Lambda Letters auction was held on Sunday, April 30th, at the Town House in Sacramento. Our goal was to raise \$1,500 and we raised just a little less than that. Not bad for two hours' work! Over 20 businesses donated a delightful array of items for auction, everything from white-water rafting trips for two to a complete 10-gallon aquarium. You will see a list of those businesses elsewhere in the newsletter. We encourage you to patronize them and thank them for supporting Lambda Letters.

Many of you, our members, also brought some great things to be auctioned and did us proud bidding for the various items offered. Our guest auctioneers, Marghe Covino and Ken Topper, kept everyone in stitches and managed to persuade one person to bid \$130 for a \$100 garden care gift certificate.

Thanks to all of you who supported us in this fund-raising event.



4811 Chippendale Dr., Suite 901, Sacramento, CA 95841

# Participate in Our Silent Auction

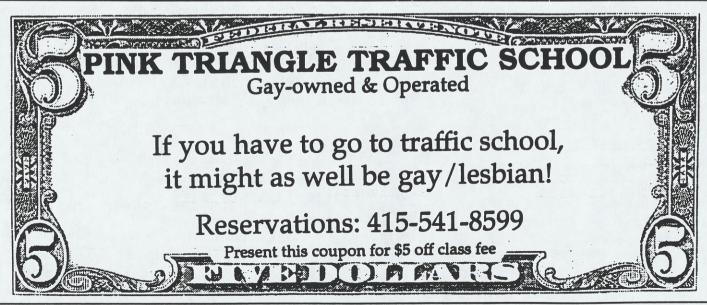
We had four gift certificates left over when we finished the auction on April 30th. They are now being offered in a silent auction in this newsletter. If you would like to bid on one of these items, send us a note telling us which item, the amount you bid, and your telephone number. We will call the highest bidders and make arrangements to get the gift certificates to them.

The four gift certificates offered are as follows:

- One chiropractic exam and adjustment from Dr. Marian Zingaro of Sacramento—a \$75 value.
- One chiropractic exam and adjustment from Dr. Donald Morren of Sacramento—a \$75 value.
- Five hours of self-service computer rental time at Compustations in Sacramento—a \$40 value.
- A \$10 gift certificate from Wild West Sandwich House of Clovis, California.

Help support Lambda Letters. Please send us your bids!





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